THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA): (a) and (b) As per provisions of Section 9 of Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 royalty on mineral cannot be enhanced more than once during any period of three years. The last two revisions were effective from 5th May, 1987 and 17th Feb., 1992.

(c) The royalty rates on major minerals (other than coal, lignite & sand for stowing) revised and notified with effect from 17.2.1992 are applicable in all the states of the North-Eastern Region except the state of Assam.

(d) The Government constituted a study Group on 30.1.95 for carrying out detailed review of rates of royalty and dead rent applicable to major minerals (other than Coal, lignite and sand for stowing). The Study Group submitted its report in November, 1995. Report of the Study Group has been examined and the revision of royalty rates is under consideration of the Government.

Default in payments by Kazakhistan

2501. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government for Kazakhistan has defaulted by not making payments on due dates to the Indian companies which had supplied 3000 tons of tea on credit three years ago with expeditious observance of formalities;

(b) whether talks have been held with Kazakhistan authorities in this regard;

(c) if so, the details thereof, alongwith the results; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to ensure early payments to Indian Companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) The Indian tea exporters had supplied 3000 MT of tea worth USD 7.64 million to a Kazakh company. A sum of USD 3.12 million has already been received and an amount of USD 4.52 million plus interest thereon still outstanding.

(b) to (d) The matter has been taken up on various occasions with the highest authorities in Kazakhistan which include:

- with deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhistan in May, 1995 during the meeting of Indo-Kazakh Joint Commission;
- by Vice President of India during his visit to Kazakh in September, 1996;
- by Minister of State for Planning and Programme Implementation and Science and Technology (Prof. Y. K. Alagh) with the Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakh in September, 1996;
- the Minister of State for Planning and Programme Implementation also has subsequently written to the Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister for resolving the matter early;
- by the Minister of State for Commerce (Dr. B. B. Ramaiah) in October, 1996 with the then Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakh;
- by Indian Ambassador with the Kazakh Health Minister who is also the Co-Chairman of the Indo-Kazakh Joint Commission and subsequently with the Kazakh Foreign Minister in November, 1996;
- with the Kazakh President during his visit to India in December, 1996.

The Kazakh authorities have conveyed that they are very keen on resolving the matter very soon despite their budgetary constraints.